

Oldtown Bridge
Spanning Pend Oreille River
on U. S. Highway 2
Oldtown
Bonner County
Idaho

HAER No. ID-7

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9-OLDTO,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

Historic American Engineering Record
Western Regional Office
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94102

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER
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Oldtown Bridge

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Location: Spans the Pend Oreille River 0.1 miles east of the
Idaho-Washington border on U. S. Highway Route 2
Oldtown, Bonner County, Idaho

UTM: 11.497500.5336660
Quad: Newport

Date of Construction: 1926-1927

Present Owner: Idaho Transportation Department
P.O. Box 7129
Boise, Idaho 83724

Present Use: Vehicular and pedestrian bridge on Federal and State
highway system

Significance: Early example of long truss technology in Idaho and a
crucial link on the highway system.

Historian: Rebecca Herbst, February 1982

Preparer: Charles M. Rountree, 1984

The Oldtown Bridge, spanning the Pend Oreille River just east of the Idaho-Washington border, forms an important interstate link. Construction of the bridge was sanctioned in 1926 with funds obtained from five different sources, including the Federal Government, the states of Washington and Idaho, and the counties of Pend Oreille, Washington, and Bonner, Idaho.

As a transportation link, the Oldtown Bridge was of tremendous significance on a local, state and national level. This bridge provided a connection between Idaho's Clark Fork Highway and Washington's Pend Oreille Highway, a crossing made previously only by ferry. The bridge also was located on the National Parks Highway and the Theodore Roosevelt International Highway. Locally, this crossing served as an important economic link, connecting Newport, Washington, to the then-thriving Humbrid Lumber Company across the border in Idaho.

The construction contract for the Oldtown Bridge was awarded to Sam R. Boudrye of Clarkston, Washington, who bid lowest for the Standard Type 1-A bridge design prepared by the Washington State Highway Department. The contract amount was \$209,175.

The bridge is 1,246 feet in length including the concrete approach spans, making it one of the longest truss type bridges on the State highway system.

The bridge consists of four, 180-foot long rigid connected steel Parker through-truss spans with nine concrete tee-beam approach spans. The superstructure of the trusses is comprised as follows: upper chords consist of laced channel sections, lower chords of channel sections with batten plates, verticals of laced channel sections, and hip verticals and diagonals of angle sections with batten plates. The floor system is composed of steel I-beams, steel stringers and a concrete deck. Portal bracing is provided by a series of laced angles and sway bracing is supplied by double angle sections.

The bridge has a twenty-foot roadway width and a five-foot wide timber plank walkway on the south side which is enclosed by a lattice railing. The substructure consists of eleven concrete piers with concrete abutments on either end. Structural parts for the truss sections were fabricated by the Virginia Bridge and Iron Works. The seven cast-iron lamp posts on the bridge were manufactured by the Boise Iron Works.

Construction work started in 1926 and was completed nearly one year later. The bridge was opened with a formal dedication on July 9, 1927. The final cost of \$218,530.16 was slightly higher than the contract amount. According to newspaper accounts, Oldtown Bridge was the largest bridge built to that date under the Idaho Department of Public Works.

The bridge is in fair to poor structural condition with some badly-bent and stressed steel members. Also, the concrete of the approach spans is cracked and spalling. The bridge is owned and maintained by the Idaho Transportation Department and is currently programmed for replacement due to its deficiencies in width, height and load carrying capacity for present day traffic levels.

References

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| Idaho Department of Public Works Biennial Report | 1926-1926 |
| Idaho Department of Public Works Biennial Repot | 1927-1928 |
| "Idaho State Highway History," unpublished work | |
| Spokane Daily Chronical, January 3, 1927 | |